Cholera infantum

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Cholera Infantum.

Of the history of Cholera Infantum, not much need be said. It has been so correctly pointed out by those who have written on the subject, and is so very uniform in its appearance, that it would be more than useless for me to quote the different authors who have illustrated its Character, in the respective Countries in which they practised. To avoid therefore useless details I shall confine myself to a few of those Authorities, who at the present day are, by general consent allowed to stand preeminent.

Cholera is derived from the greek word χολή, bile, and ρέω, to flow, a genus of disease arranged by Cullen, in the Class Neuroses, and

and order Spasm. It might be expected that I should here for a while expatiate on the subject, but as long experience is necessary to enable us to write with accuracy on any subject, I shall content myself with a few observations. This disease is not confined to any particular Country: Every part of the Vast Globe has on the contrary experienced its ravages. It is said by Authors to prevail most in the months of Autumn: but we sometimes meet with cases during the Chilling blasts of winter. It is said to prevail mostly in crowded places as Hospitals, and other receptacles of filth, In most of the large towns of the United States. It is a disease principally of warm Climates, and it partakes of the Remitting type of fever. This disease is aggravated by the heat of the weather, hence more Children are said to die in August, than in any other month. Children between one and two years of age, are

are peculiarly liable to this disease. I shall not be very minute in detailing the various symptoms of Cholera Infantum, as they have been pointed out by authors. In most instances Cholera Infantum commences with a diarrhœa, which continues several days without any other symptom of indisposition; but frequently a violent vomiting, and purging, and high fever, precede it. the matter discharged from the stomach and bowels is generally yellow, or green; the stools are sometimes slimy and bloody, without any tincture of bile; worms are frequently discharged I have seen thirty and forty, discharged in the course of a few hours. Children in this stage of the disease appear to suffer a good deal of pain, the pulse is quick and weak the head usually warm, while the extremities retain their natural heat. The head is in many instances so much affected as to produce delirium. An intense thirst attends every stage of the disease. Through the whole course of the disease the stools are frequently large, and extremely

fatal, but in some instances they are without smell and resemble drunkenness and intoxication.

Causes. there are various being, such as induced either directly, or indirectly, on the intestines. Vicissitudes of weather alternating from heat to Cold, and particularly so when the Atmosphere is moist. In warm climates and seasons, after extreme hot and dry weather a fall of rain Cooling the Atmosphere seems well Calculated to bring on this disease, and it is very probable that an obstructed perspiration may have also a share in this, tho we frequently observe the disease to appear when no change in the temperature of the air nor any indication of Cold has been observed. The inattention of parents to change their Childrens Clothing, and to adapt it to the Vicissitudes of weather, is said to lay the foundation for Cholera Infantum. Dentition may act as an exciting Cause, hence we perceive this disease to be more violent at that age than at any other. This disease is brought into action by improper articles in diet, Clothing &c. The

the fruits of the season are a most prolific source of this disease. Children under such circumstances should abstain from all kinds of fruit, nothing in my opinion has a tendency so readily to produce this disease as the use of unripe or sour fruits. I have seen it brought on repeatedly by eating apples grapes & Celery. Worms have been suspected as being a cause of this disease. It is generally admitted Cholera infantum is brought on by the heat and influence of our large Cities during the summer months.

Appearance on Dissection.

The appearances which the dissection of those who have died of this disease, present to us are the following. Inflammation may be traced through the whole tract of the Alimentary Canal, but more particularly as in the mucous membrane. Not only in the stomach, or the coats of the stomach, but also the intestines, but more so in the duodenum and lower Pylorus. The large intestines much,

affected except in cases which go on to Dysentery in this we frequently discover ulceration, and the liver is sometimes very much affected in protracted cases, being occasionally found to double its natural size. The gall bladder is usually distended with retained bile; the pancreas is occasionally affected. I have had several opportunities of examining patients who have died of Cholera Infantum, and in no instance found all the alimentary viscera morbid, the great intestines either mortified, or partly inflamed and mortified. The mesenteric glands considerably enlarged, and a number of bread spots near the rectum.

(7) DIAGNOSIS.

Almost all the diseases which infest the alimentary canal do in some measure bear an analogy to Cholera Infantum, yet we can distinguish to form them with facility. Thus we shall be able to do by inspecting the

the evacuations. It may be distinguished from the first by the nature of the discharges, be not being attended with Vermina, and Tenesmus, in the same manner as I shall not enter in medical treatise the rules by which it may be distinguished from the other diseases of a similar nature as it would be more than I am disposed to attend. I shall therefore proceed to speak of the

(C) Prognosis.

This may be favourable in all mild attacks and even in more violent ones a hope may usually be indulged if we reduce the fever in a short time, but if not more serious consequences are liable to ensue. Hiccoughs, generally forms as I have witnessed several times. Lastly, delirium, or an erect posture great loss of muscular power, and considerable irritability of the stomach. a small quick intermitting pulse, subsultus tendinum these are unfavourable and indicate great danger. A recovery may be expected when the above enumerated symptoms are not so violent.

Methods of Cure.

As to the treatment of Cholera Infantum, no little diversity of opinion has existed among our best practitioners. Now this discordance of opinion took its rise can only be accounted for from the different modifications of the disease, the climate in which it exists or from the peculiar situation in which subjects are often located. All these circumstances may indeed alone or other have been either favorable or unfavorable to the patient. Thus in my opinion is one of the most potent reasons of such a multitude of sentiments concerning the true method, not only of curing, but even of preventing this disease common to mankind. and this is the cause why that harmony of sentiment cannot exist among physicians as well as among other professional Characters. It would be tedious for me therefore to mention all the opinions which have been offered upon the subject as the result of long and correct experience, I shall confine myself to those which most accord with my own. The first step towards the cure of

of this troublesome disease depends on many circumstances. In the first place the remedies to be used must be in proportion to the violence of the disease; and we should not neglect to keep in view the period in which the disease exists — the time of the year — the strength of the patient. All these will assist in making us form a correct estimate of the true method of cure. If in the first place there is much inflammation which is very generally the case, nothing is so well calculated to subdue it as venesection; but in many instances it commences with a disordered state of the alimentary canal; in such cases surgeons in general should be directed to its evacuation; but as regards the precise course to be pursued to effect this purpose, there is by no means the same unanimity of sentiment. Cathartics generally proceed for this purpose; in truth in some mild cases this would answer very well, it passes readily through the intestines and occasions little or no griping, the only difficulty is in getting children to take it. The best way therefore of giving it is in combination with a little sugar as this

in some measure prevents the deleterious effects of the Oil. But we frequently meet with cases attended with violent vomiting; the patient rejects the medicine as fast as exhibited. In such instances I have found the anodyne infusions, to answer extremely well; fomentations of warm cloths applied to the epigastric region lime water and milk and the Neutral Mixture, have all been found very beneficial. After this indication has been properly fulfilled we should then resort to Cathartics. These are most important medicines in the cure of Cholera Infantum; they are not only necessary to remove the concretions attendant upon it, but are highly useful by exciting an increased secretion from the mucous membrane of the alimentary intestines. For this purpose nothing have I seen to answer so well as the mercurial purges, in combination with Opium. These should be given in small doses, for not very effectually at a purge while at the same time the spasmodic uneasiness is in a great measure mitigated, by the Opium which enters into the Compound. The purging should

be continued for a while, with some of the Neutral Salts, which I have found to answer very well as the Epsom Salts. Rhubarb has been recommended but, possessing some thing of an astringent property practitioners have generally laid it aside. It is important to continue the purging for some time, where there are strong indications of bilious accumulations. Every case of Cholera Infantum is marked by great inequality of temperature while one portion of the body is parching hot another part is very cold, here nothing have I seen to answer so well as the warm bath, by immersion we equalize the temperature, and diffuse a glow over the whole surface. It is highly necessary that this should be continued every day as its effects are merely transient. Blisters these are very important in the cure of this disease they prove serviceable by causing a translation of morbid excitement from one part to some other, much attention must be paid to the grade of inflammation. Some difference of opinion has existed in to the size

of the blister it is now generally conceded that it should be large enough to cover the abdomen. Many practitioners prefer the extremities, for their application on account of the great inconvenience which the patient experiences on coming to rest. This seems to be totally unnecessary, and excites therefore a pity them to the former work. Much advantage is said to be derived from stimulating embrocations to the surface. In the treatment of this disease authors differ but little in regard to its latter stages; and therefore there is but of little consequence, for unless it has been properly managed in the beginning, the patient is generally indebted for his recovery to the strength of his constitution, or to some other auspicious chance, and not medicine, treatment in this labels. After a few days and even months the disease lays us into a [illegible] attended with some of the symptoms and [illegible], it is usual at this conclusion, to find the stomach greatly debilitated, with a total loss of the powers of digestion, and in many cases irreparable.

The remedies at this stage of the disease are the Alkalies and Cretaceous preparations. The following I have seen to answer extremely well ℞. Cretæ preparatæ ℥ij ~~Cinnamomi~~ gtts XV. Saccarum Album ℥j. Aquæ ℥iij M. the dose of this mixture ℥ß every two or three hours the Alkalies may be used thus. ℞ Salts Tartar ℥j. Laudanum gtts XV. white Sugar ℥j. Water ℥iij. the dose of this mixture a table spoonful every two or three hours. Rhubarb may at this time be resorted to with considerable advantage the following preparation is very much used this is admirably adapted to the Complaint. ℞. Rhubarb X grains Calcined Magnesia XXX grains Laudanum gtts XV. Oil of Anise gtts iii or iv Water ℥iij M. the dose ℥ß every two or three hours these preparations are particularly calculated to relieve the Tormina, & Tenesmus, which are apt to occur. Enemas of melted butter repeated as the sitty, I have seen used with great advantage it is necessary that this should be used pretty copiously. As the disease still progresses it loses most of its marked symptoms, and becomes a simple diarrhœa here the mineral astringents

come in with advantage among the best of them is Alum. It is generally given in combination with Antimonial Opium two or three grains of Alum with one sixth of a grain of Opium. The Vegetable astringents have also been tried and with various success. Galanbe, Tea should be used in form of powder, but it is remarkable which I have seen to answer extremely well and in many cases should be tried to all the other astringents in the common black berry root, this should be given in the form of decoction. It should be tried in vinegar and water with long & apparently have been used again and again with unnecessary utility. — I cannot close my remarks respecting the inner membrane, the mild & irritating this disease here is no necessity for a constant opinion but in the milder cases the patient should abstain from all substances of a stimulating nature, such as wine, beer, etc. etc. The diet should consist of the farinaceous, mucilaginous such as Oatmeal, Sago, Tapioca. — After all the enthusiasm

remedy, a change of climate, or, so long as the Child remains in the City and is exposed to the Operation of those Causes which produce the disease, we may palliate, but hardly ever effect a permanent Cure. In such a Case a Country residence is preferable. To prevent a disease so fatal in its occurrence, becomes a high duty, for the accomplishing of which the following rules are necessary. The Child should never be weaned under twelve months. Where a predisposition to Cholera infantum exists we should employ the Cold bath. The Child should wear flannel. It is necessary that the gums of the Child be scarified occasionally.